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Aunt Sophronia at College

By

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

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Bugbee's Popular Plays

Aunt Sophronia at College

... By ...

Willis N. Bugbee

Author of "Billy's Aunt Jane," "Coonville 'Ristocrat Club,"

"Uncle Hiram and the Peddlers," "Uncle Ephraim's

Summer Boarders," etc.

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SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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AUNT SOPHRONIA AT COLLEGE

CHARACTERS

WALTER BRONSON—"Aunt Sophronia"

PERCY LONGMAN—"Uncle Ebenezer"

FRED LANDERS—"Uncle Jerry"

NED HOLLISTER—"Uncle Hiram"

ELEANOR DE LANCY

ALICE MINER

HAZEL GREENE

LUCY BONNER

MARIAN CLARK

} Co-eds at Blankton College

MISS SOPHRONIA LOUISE FLETCHER—*The Real Aunt*

PROFESSOR BROWNLEY—*President of Blankton College*

BRIDGET O'REILLY

TIME OF PLAYING—One Hour and a Quarter.

COSTUMES

Students wear ordinary clothing except as described in the play.

MISS FLETCHER should be made up very similar to WALTER in Act III.

PROF. B. wears dark, sedate suit.

MRS. O'REILLY wears work dress with large apron in Act I; neat, plain dress and white apron in Act III.

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Aunt Sophronia at College

ACT I

SCENE: *A sitting room in a small college. The furniture may consist of leather upholstered chairs, sofa and a small table or stand. MARIAN is discovered studying.*

(Enter ELEANOR and HAZEL.)

HAZEL. Oh, here's Marian, studying away for dear life.

ELEANOR. That's why she always stands so much better in her classes than the rest of us.

MARIAN. Really, I just came in here a moment ago. I haven't had a chance to study before this morning.

ELEANOR. Neither have we, but we'll have plenty of time now. Say, don't you think it downright mean that Prof. won't let us entertain the boys any more.

MARIAN. Why, what's the idea?

HAZEL. Anyone might think you hadn't seen the bulletin board this morning.

MARIAN. I haven't. Tell me about it.

ELEANOR. Well, it's just like this: Prof.'s posted a notice that the boys and girls can't meet together in private hereafter so that puts an end to all our little parties and spreads and such things.

HAZEL. I can't see any sense in it, either. We never did any harm—just innocent little amusements, that's all.

MARIAN. Perhaps he thinks we don't get our lessons as well as we ought.

HAZEL. Shucks! I haven't flunked in only one subject so far this year.

ELEANOR. I haven't missed but two, and that wasn't on account of our parties.

(Enter LUCY and ALICE)

LUCY. Say, girls, have you read the bulletin board this morning?

GIRLS. I should say we have!

ELEANOR. We've just been discussing it, but we'd like to leave off the "dis."

MARIAN. Why, Eleanor!

LUCY. Isn't it horrid? No more parties for us.

HAZEL. I say, what's the use of school if we can't have any fun. Everyone says school days are the happiest days of one's life.

ELEANOR. And now to have all the fun and enjoyment taken out of it with one "fell swoop." It's what I call outrageous.

ALICE. It's simply—simply—

MARIAN. Simply what?

ALICE. I don't know—I can't think of a suitable adjective to express it. But did you notice how it was worded: "Except by special permission of the faculty."

HAZEL. Yes, but who wants to run to the faculty every time they have a little spread? Not I.

OTHERS. Nor I, either.

ELEANOR. Have you seen any of the boys since? I wonder what they think of it.

ALICE. They don't like it any better than we do. I saw Percy Longman and Walter Bronson on the street this morning and I guess they've got some scheme brewing. They said for us to watch out for further developments.

LUCY. What do you suppose they meant by that?

ALICE. I'm sure I don't know, but I imagine we'll find out before long.

HAZEL. Dear me! It's like those funny pictures where "somebody is always taking the joy out of life."

ELEANOR. And just to think we had planned such a lovely time for this very evening.

LUCY. And now we can't have it. I think it's a downright shame.

ALICE. Well, don't be too pessimistic about it. For my part I'm going to wait and see what those boys are up to.

(Enter Bridget.)

BRIDGET. Wull, wull, here yez be. I've been lookin' all over the college for yez, so I have.

ELEANOR. Must be something urgent, isn't it, Mrs. O'Reilly?

BRIDGET. Faix, an' I dunno if it's phwat yez say it is or not. Ye see, I was shwapin' off the front shteps whin four or foive byes that was shtandin' there talkin' jist lifted their hats so gintleman loike (*imitating*) an' sez to me, "Good mornin', Mrs. O'Reilly." An' I sez, "Good mornin', me foine young gintlemin," for they were all iv that.

ALICE. Was one of them Percy Longman?

BRIDGET. Yis, mum, Percy Longman was wan an' Mr. Bronson was anither an' I dunno who ilse, but onyway they were all foine young gintlemin.

HAZEL. Well, what about it, Mrs. O'Reilly?

BRIDGET. I'm just a-comin' to it. Ye see, one iv thim byes—I think it was Mr. Longman—sez he to me, "Mrs. O'Reilly, can yez kape a sacret?" "A sacret?" sez I. "Iv course I can for haven't I been married to Patrick O'Reilly for fourteen years an' he a detective on the polace force. An' that's the blissed truth—me husband is wan iv the bist detectives they've got an'—"

MARIAN. Well, never mind about Mr. O'Reilly and the force. What did the boys want of you?

BRIDGET. Yis, yis, I'm comin' 'to that part iv it directly. Wan iv thim byes give me a letther an' sez to me, "Mrs. O'Reilly, would yez be so kind an' condescendin' as to hand this letther to Miss Alice Miner or Miss De Lancy an' niver say a word to anywan about it?"

GIRLS. Oh, a letter! A letter!

ALICE. Where is the letter, Mrs. O'Reilly?

BRIDGET. I'll get it for yez at once (*searching pocket*.) Wull, thin I tould thim I would deliver it safely an' niver tell a livin' soul about it, an' wid that they shlipped a half a dollar into me hand, bliss their dear hearts. Wull now pwhat did I do wid that letther?

ELEANOR. Oh, dear! If you've gone and lost it! What would we do?

HAZEL. And suppose Prof. should find it? Wouldn't we be in a fine scrape?

BRIDGET. Wull, now, jist hould your horses! How could I lose it out iv me pocket? (*Searches for it and at last discovers it.*) Faix, an' here it is at lasht. (*Hands it to ALICE, who proceeds to open it.*) I hope it'll bring ye a bit iv joy, so I do.

SEVERAL. Thank you, Mrs. O'Reilly. Here's another half dollar to keep that other one company.

BRIDGET. Thank ye. Now I'll hurry along an' tind to me work.

LUCY. Read it out loud, Alice so we can all hear it.

ALICE. (*Reads*):

Dear Co-eds:

We boys have thought up a nifty little plan by which we hope to carry out that little stunt tonight on regular schedule time. We have planned to impersonate some of your out-of-town relatives and will make you short calls this evening, so be prepared to receive your relatives with open arms. Of course, we don't know your uncles' and aunts' names, or how they look, or whether you have any such possessions, but neither does Prof. know so "we should worry." We'll bring some "eats" with us in our satchels. If you don't care to receive your dear relatives tonight let us know by next parcel post. Au revoir until tonight.

From your prospective Uncles and Aunts.

HAZEL. Well, what do you know about that? Going to impersonate our aunts and uncles and don't even know that we have any.

ELEANOR. I think it's a wild and reckless scheme, but I'm willing to take the chances if you girls are.

LUCY. I'm willing but we'll have to do our part and make everything appear real.

ALICE. Because if the faculty should find it out our goose would be cooked all right.

MARIAN. I'd just like to see them. I bet they'll look funny.

HAZEL. It'll be just like acting a real play, that's all.

ELEANOR. The boys can do that all right. They're just splendid when it comes to dramatics.

MARIAN. I wonder whose aunts and uncles they're going to impersonate.

ELEANOR. I'm sure I don't care. One of them can be my Uncle Eben and another Aunt Sophronia if they want to.

LUCY. Well, one of them can be my Uncle Jerry. He's awfully jolly—some like Fred, only a good deal older.

ALICE. And my Uncle Hiram Podger wears a full beard. That would help out a lot. I've got his picture in my room.

HAZEL. Well, suppose we write down a little description of each one and send them down by Mrs. O'Reilly. That will be the best way.

MARIAN. Here's paper and pencil. Go ahead. I'll write them. Let's start with Uncle Eben.

ELEANOR. All right. (*Dictates description while MARIAN writes*): Name—Uncle Ebenezer Spriggins; characteristics—tall and slim, sandy complexion, red hair and long chin whiskers, about 50 years old, dressed plainly and is rather awkward in his movements. Now shall I give a description of Aunt Sophronia?

MARIAN. Yes, proceed.

ELEANOR. Name—Aunt Sophronia Spriggins; characteristics—short and rather stout, dark hair and red face, dresses plainly and is real jolly.

LUCY. That would suit Walter the best of any.

MARIAN. Next is your uncle, Lucy.

LUCY. Well, my uncle's name is Jerry Slocum. He is about 45 years old, bald-headed, has brown mustache and goatee, of medium height, rather fleshy and as full of fun as a skimmer is full of holes. He usually wears a blue serge suit, tan shoes and a brown soft hat.

MARIAN. Now for Uncle Hiram.

ALICE. Well, I told you his name was Hiram Podger and I'll send his photograph along. That will be better than describing him. Just wait a minute till I get it. (*Exit.*)

MARIAN. There, I've written just a word to say that the scheme is O. K. and that we enclose descriptions of the uncles and aunts whom we should like to have come to see us. Isn't that enough?

HAZEL. Sure thing. Now somebody call Mrs. O'Reilly.

ELEANOR. I will. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter ALICE with photo.*)

ALICE. Here's the picture and an envelope to put it in. I'm just dying to see my new Uncle Hiram.

(*MARIAN puts letter and photo in envelope and seals it.*)

(*Enter ELEANOR followed by Mrs. O'REILLY.*)

MRS. O'R. Well, did anyone iver see the loikes iv so many sacrets as you gurls an' byes do be havin'—first wan an' thin the ither. I wonder do the perfessor be havin' ony sacrets?

ELEANOR.—Well here's the letter, Mrs. O'Reilly, but for pity sakes don't let the professor or the faculty see it.

MRS. O'R. Och, niver yez worry about me lettin' the faculty get hould iv it. Just thrust Biddy O'Reilly for that.

HAZEL. Here's a quarter for the trouble.

MRS. O'R. Thank ye, Miss, I'll take it quick as iver I can to Mr.—Mr.—now bliss me shtars! Who did yez say I was to take it to?

ELEANOR. Why, Percy Longman or Walter Bronson, of course. Now be sure and don't forget again.

MARIAN. Don't forget and give it to the professor.

MRS. O'R. Shure an' I won't, Miss. (*Exit.*)

ALICE. There! Now I think we'd better go to our rooms and spend some time in study because we won't have any time this evening.

LUCY. A splendid idea. We'll have too much visiting to do when we meet our uncles and our aunts.

(*Girls leave stage singing college song.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE: NED's room in the boys' dormitory. A few chairs, table or stand and a large folding screen. NED is discovered reading.)

(*Enter PERCY and FRED with bundles.*)

PERCY. Well, Ned, old boy, we've got 'em.

FRED. That's right—we've got the whole outfit.

NED. Did you get a full beard for me?

FRED. To be sure we did and it's *some* beard, believe me.

PERCY. We got everything except a dress for Walt. That's out of our line.

FRED. Walt's out hunting for one now.

NED. Did Old Snookems have any remarks about the costumes?

PERCY. Not much. He thinks they're for a masquerade.

NED. I hope you fellows didn't enlighten him.

PERCY. I should say not. We didn't want to give the whole thing away. We're taking desperate chances as it is.

NED. You're right. If Prof. should find it out—oh, boy!

FRED. Yes, if he should—but it's up to us not to let him find it out. It's up to us to make the thing so real that no one will mistrust anything out of the ordinary.

PERCY. We'd better be at it, too. There isn't any too much time.

NED. That's what I say. In the words of Uncle Hiram, "Them are my sentiments, too."

(Boys open packages, revealing wigs, beards, etc.)

PERCY. Well, there they are. Go to it.

NED *(holding full beard)*. Gee! Here's your Uncle Hiram all right.

FRED. I'm mighty glad that Lucy's uncle has sense enough not to wear such a mop as that on his face.

NED. The more whiskers the less chance of detection.

PERCY. Here's mine of the auburn hue, and here's some grease paint that may come in handy.

FRED. We can't all work at the same time. There aren't mirrors enough to go around.

NED. You fellows can use the mirrors while I'm putting my togs on. I'll just step behind the screen.

FRED. Say! You're all right, Ned. You've certainly got a head for business.

NED. Efficiency—that's the word for it. "Efficiency" is my motto in everything—work or play.

PERCY. We've noticed that before.

NED. Well, let's cut the eulogy and get down to business. *(Goes back of screen with clothes.)*

FRED. Say! How do you make these things stay on, anyway?

PERCY. That's simple enough. Just let me finish these and I'll show you.

NED. Hi! Somebody toss those blue pants over here. I got the wrong pair.

PERCY. You fellows need as much waiting on as a couple of two year old kids. *(Tosses trousers over screen.)*

NED. Thanks, awfully. I'll do as much for you sometime.

FRED. There! How do these look, Perce?

PERCY. Bully, but your face needs touching up a little. *(Paints FRED's face.)* Now you'll do.

NED *(emerging from behind screen)*. Well, I'm through. Who's next?

FRED. I am. *(Goes behind screen. Ned puts on whiskers.)*

NED. Hadn't I better have a coat of paint on my face, too? I'm supposed to have been working out in the hayfield all summer.

PERCY. Why, sure! Step right over this way, my dear boy, and I'll proceed to do the little deed. (*Paints (N54': face.)*)

NED. Thar, by heck, I reckon I'll dew.

PERCY. Hold on! You want some talcum powder on your hair, don't you?

NED. That's so. Gee! I'd forgotten I was an old grizzled farmer.

FRED (*emerging*). Go ahead if you want to change your togs. Perce.

NED. Where do you suppose Walt is all this time?

FRED. He must be having a deuce of a time finding a dress.

NED. Where was he going after it, anyway?

FRED. Blamed if I know. Guess the housekeeper was going to hunt one up somewhere. If she couldn't find one he was going to try Mrs. Muggs.

NED. Who's she?

FRED. Why, don't you know the fat woman that used to run the lunch room down on the corner?

NED. Sure I do. He'll have a dress all right if he gets hers. (*Sound is heard outside.*)

PERCY (*back of screen*). Well here comes the wandering boy now.

(*Enter WALTER with bundles.*)

BOYS. "Hail the conquering hero comes!"

WALTER. Well I got the dress at last.

NED. Good work! We thought you were having one made.

PERCY. Where'd you get it, Walt?

WALTER. Had to go piking way over to Muggses for it.

FRED. How does it fit?

WALTER. Don't know yet. I haven't had a chance to try it on.

FRED. Well, now's the time and here's the place, and when you get rigged up you'll be the—

NED. Girl!

FRED. No, he'll be Aunt Sophronia, of course.

(*WALTER unwraps parcel and holds large dress in front of him.*)

NED. Some dress, eh? Have an idea it's going to be big enough! (*Boys laugh.*)

FRED. You ought to hire a dressmaker to rebuild it.

PERCY (*emerging*). What are you talking about? This isn't an automobile or a house. You mean to fit it.

WALTER. Nothing of the kind. I intend to rebuild myself to the dress. The description says that Aunt Sophronia is a large woman. (*Tries to get dress on by stepping into it.*) Well, I'll be blamed if I know how to get into this blamed thing.

PERCY. Let me show you how.

WALTER. You? Ha! ha! Just as if you'd had so much experience with skirts.

PERCY. Didn't I wear one in the play last year when I acted the part of a beautiful young lady?

NED. Gee! They must have been hard up for material when they chose you for a beautiful young lady.

PERCY. I'm not so sure but they might have done worse.

(During this time WALTER, assisted by PERCY, has succeeded in getting dress on.)

WALTER. Now somebody get a couple of pillows for stuffing. (FRED steps outside and gets pillows.)

FRED. Say, you ought to have tied these on before you put the dress on.

WALTER. That's all right, we can do it yet. The dress isn't buttoned.

FRED. Here's a cord that came around the package.

(WALTER takes arms from sleeves and drops dress to floor while others tie pillows, one at front and one at back. The dress is then pulled on over pillows, and the boys button it at back.)

PERCY. It needs a little more shape in the front, boys.

(NED and FRED try to move pillows into shape, striking with fists in attempting to do so.)

WALTER. Hold on, I say; do you take me for a punching bag?

FRED. You want your stomach in the right place, don't you, especially when you're going to a spread? You wouldn't want it away around on your right side.

WALTER. I don't care to have it punched clear through to my backbone, either.

PERCY. What about your wig?

WALTER. Don't need any. I'm going to wear a hat and a veil. I'll keep it on while Prof's around. Gee! This dress is fierce. It sets about like a straight jacket.

NED. Well, if you fellows are all ready let's make a break.

FRED. We can't all go together. Prof. would surely suspect something.

WALTER. Of course not. Percy and I'll go first. We have to go together anyway. Then you fellows can take turns coming after.

NED. Hold on, boys, let's have a song before we go.

PERCY. All right. We have just about time enough. And say fellows—don't forget to stop and fill up the suit cases with the victuals. Mrs. Briggs said she'd have them all ready for us.

NED. That's right. Don't forget the eatables whatever you do.

(All form in line, suit cases and satchels in hand, and sing college song.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE: Came as ACT I. The girls are discovered apparently in very earnest study.

ALICE. I wish somebody would help me solve this problem in geometry—how to bisect an equilateral triangle. I've got as far as to let $A B C$ equal the triangle, but I can't think what to do next.

ELEANOR. Well, don't try to think of it for pity sakes! Geometry's altogether too strenuous for any of us tonight under the existing conditions.

HAZEL. And I've got a problem in physics I'd like to have explained.

MARIAN. What's it about?

HAZEL. Centrifugal force. I'll read it if you'll agree to help me out with it.

LUCY. Oh me! Oh my! Don't spring any such things on us now.

MARIAN. I'd like to know the date of the First Crusade and what was the object of it anyway. Will someone please elucidate?

ALICE. Ask Lucy. She's a great hand for dates.

LUCY. Yes, both figs and dates.

ELEANOR. Well, I'd like to have someone tell me the characteristics of Henry the Eighth.

HAZEL. He had eight wives. That's enough to know about him.

MARIAN. I should say that was altogether too many.

LUCY. And I'm afraid we may have altogether too many uncles before we're through with this evening's escapade.

HAZEL. Sh! Here comes somebody! Everybody study. (*All pretend to study.*)

(*Enter MRS. O'REILLY.*)

MRS. O'R. Faix an' ye're all studyin' your lessons here to bate the band. The professor sint me up to see if iverything was all right an' begorra 'tis a good report I'll be givin' him.

ALICE. Thank you, Mrs. O'Reilly. By the way, did you hand the letter to Percy or Walter this morning?

MRS. O'R. Yis, mum, I did that, an' I thought they'd jist bust thimsilves a laughin' whin they read thim notes. Wull, I'll be goin' an' tellin' the professor that iverything's jist lovely. (*Exit.*)

MARIAN. What a good soul Mrs. O'Reilly is.

ELEANOR. Especially if there's a quarter or half a dollar in sight.

HAZEL (*looking at watch.*) Do you know it's nearly eight o'clock now, girls?

LUCY. Eight o'clock and all is well.

ALICE. But isn't it 'most time for—sh! Here's someone coming! (*All pretend to study.*)

(*Enter PROF., followed by PERCY as Uncle Ebenezer, and WALTER as Aunt Sophronia. UNCLE EBENEZER carries old-fashioned satchel.*)

PROF. Miss De Lancey, here are some of your friends who wish to see you.

ELEANOR (*rushing up to boys and shaking hands heartily.*) Oh, Aunt Sophronia and Uncle Ebenezer! I'm so glad to see you. When did you leave home? And how do you happen to be here?

PERCY (*Uncle E.*) Wal, ye see, we left Kokomo this mornin' on the early train an'—

ELEANOR. Kokomo?

ELEANOR (*Aunt E.*) Yes, an' we're headed for Bosting—goin' down to see your Aunt Melindy.

ELEANOR. Well, now isn't that nice!

PERCY (*Uncle E.*) An' bein' this was on the way down we cal'lated we'd stop off jist to take a squint at the college an' see how you was gettin' along.

PROF. Allow me to say that we're always glad to have the friends of our pupils come to see them. You may entertain them right in here, Miss De Lancy.

ELEANOR. Thank you, Professor—oh, by the way, I forgot

to introduce them to you. This is my Aunt Sophronia and Uncle Ebenezer from Riceville. (*They exchange greetings.*)

PROF. From Riceville, did you say? I understood—

ELEANOR. I beg pardon—I meant from Kokomo.

PROF. Well, as I said before, you may entertain your guests in this room.

(*ELEANOR seats boys and they talk among themselves.*)

PROF. (*to other girls.*) I am glad to see you so diligent in your studies, young ladies. I hope you will continue to be so. Your standings have not been as high as I should like to see them.

HAZEL. We're doing our best, Professor.

PROF. I hope so—I hope so at least. (*Exit.*)

(*A pause, then all begin to laugh.*)

ELEANOR. Glory be! But you do act the parts to perfection as far as looks go.

PERCY. Do we really resemble your uncle and aunt.

ELEANOR. I should say as much. You are the exact doubles of them. How did you ever do it?

WALTER. Oh, we went down to the costumer and got him to fit us out.

ELEANOR. But one thing you got wrong.

PERCY. What's that?

ELEANOR. My Aunt Sophronia and Uncle Ebenezer don't talk in that outrageous style. My aunt went to college when she was young.

WALTER. Gee, we didn't know that. You didn't mention it in your descriptions.

ELEANOR. And Kokomo? Whatever made you say "Kokomo?"

PERCY. You didn't tell us, so how were we to know where your uncle and aunt lived? We had to invent something and—well, Kokomo was as good as anything we could think of.

LUCY. Isn't this jolly! I hope my Uncle Jerry will do as well.

ALICE. And my Uncle Hiram.

PERCY. Don't worry, they were looking fine when we left them. We didn't all dare come up together for fear Prof. would smell a rat.

MARIAN. He never mistrusted anything.

ALICE.—Somebody else coming! I wonder if it's Uncle Hiram.

(*Enter MRS. O'R. followed by FRED, as Uncle Jerry.*)

MRS. O'R. Here's a gentleman that do be lookin' for Miss Lucy. He says he's your Uncle Jerry. Professor tould me to bring him up.

FRED (*Uncle Jerry*). I reckon she'd had quite a tug a bringin' me up here. Haw! haw! haw!

LUCY. My! This is a glad surprise, Uncle Jerry. Why didn't you let me know you were coming?

FRED. Gosh, I didn't know it myself till today. Had to go through here on business so I sez to myself I guess I'll stop off an' see Lucy, so here I be.

LUCY. I'm awfully glad you came. Now you must sit right down and tell me all about things at home.

MRS. O'R. Wull, I'll jist be goin' along about me work. If yez want anything remember it's Biddy O'Reilly is your friend an' at your sarvice.

LUCY. Thank you, Mrs. O'Reilly. I'll hand you another quarter in the morning.

FRED. Gosh. I forgot about givin' a tip. Here, my good woman. (*Hands coin.*)

MRS. O'R. Hivin bless ye, Miss Lucy, an' you Uncle Jerry, an' don't forget if yez want anything to call on yours thrully. (*Exit.*)

FRED. Well, how do I measure up to the old original "Uncle Jerry?"

LUCY. Splendid! I just knew you would.

FRED. Gee! I was scared when I asked Prof. if I could see you. I expected he'd see through it all.

ALICE. Prof.'s so near-sighted that he wouldn't notice it.

MARIAN. I don't believe even Mrs. O'Reilly suspects anything.

HAZEL. It's working out fine. I hope Ned succeeds as well as you people have.

WALTER. He looks just like the photograph you sent. It all depends upon how he acts the part.

PERCY. Ned's a first-class actor when it comes to comedy.

ALICE. You needn't call my Uncle Hiram a comedy character, because he isn't. He's real nice.

PERCY. I apologize herewith. I meant no reflection whatever on your uncle.

FRED. I hope Ned will think to bring along that other suitcase. The best part of the "cats" are in that.

WALTER. Gee! What would Prof. and the faculty say if they caught onto our little stunt?

PERCY. I've a notion that some of us might take a good long vacation.

MARIAN. Do you really think they would expel us from school?

PERCY. Can't say. You aren't getting faint-hearted, are you?

MARIAN. N-no, but I was just thinking.

ALICE. Hark! Here's where my Uncle Hiram makes his appearance.

(*A pause—girls study. Boys act assumed parts, visiting with ELEANOR and LUCY.*)

(*Enter MRS. O'R. followed by NED, as Uncle Hiram.*)

MRS. O'R. Begorra, here's anither uncle for yez. It's for Miss Alice this toime.

ALICE. Why, Uncle Hiram, how glad I am to see you. (*Rushes up and shakes hands.*) Girls, do let me make you acquainted with my uncle—Mr. Hiram Podger. (*To NED.*) These are some of my classmates, Uncle.

NED (*Uncle H.*) Pleased to meet you all.

SEVERAL. And we are very glad to know you, Mr. Podger.

HAZEL. You are all "welcome to our city"—so are all of you uncles and aunts.

ALICE. Do tell me what brings you here, Uncle Hiram.

NED (*Uncle H.*) Wal, I callate 'twas the Limited Express

train brought me to the depot an' one of them benzine buggies fetched me up here.

ALICE. Oh, but I mean—

NED. You mean what'd I come for? Wal, nothin' in particular—your ma wanted me to run down an' see how you was gettin' along—that's about all.

(MRS. O'REILLY turns her back and begins to laugh heartily.)

HAZEL. What's the matter, Mrs. O'Reilly?

MR. O'R. Wull, I'll jist have to tell yez. If I hadn't cut me eye teeth several years ago, an' if I hadn't been carryin' letthers all day long betwixt some byes and gurls, I would say 'twas a funny procadin', this uncle business, so I would, but as 'tis I'm wise to the game.

SEVERAL. Oh! oh! oh!

ELEANOR. Have you suspected it all along, Mrs. O'Reilly.

MRS. O'R. Shure, an' I have. Did yez think I was blind or daffy?

HAZEL. But you won't tell anyone about it, will you?

MRS. O'R. Niver a word will they hear iv it from Biddy O'Reilly.

ALL. Thank you! Thank you!

NED. We'll remember you in our wills.

PERCY. In the meantime, here's a quarter to sort of bind the bargain.

OTHER BOYS. Here's another! And another! (*Hand quarters.*)

MISS O'R. Bliss your dear hearts. I wouldn't moind if yez had a picnic ivery day. (*Exit.*)

WALTER. Gee whiz! She must have a good sized bank account already on the tips us fellows have given her.

ELEANOR. We girls have been bribing her all day too.

FRED. Well, if all the uncles and aunts have arrived let's proceed with the "eats." I didn't have time to get a lunch before I came.

NED. Neither did I, and these whiskers make me tired. I never will begrudge what I pay the barbers after this.

PERCY. Yours are all right, but think of having a crop of red whiskers like these on your chin. Holy Mackerel!

WALTER. But think of having a bay window like this—and a skirt besides. Pity the trials of your Aunt Sophronia!

HAZEL. If you don't like skirts what do you think of us girls?

WALTER. You have my deepest sympathy.

PERCY. I thought somebody spoke about eating.

FRED. I spoke of it a short time ago.

PERCY. Well, all in favor of it say "Aye."

ALL. Aye! Aye!

PERCY. Carried unanimously.

ALICE. Where are the napkins, Lucy?

LUCY. Right here in my bag—and here are some wafers, too. (*Hands napkins to ALICE, who distributes them.*)

PERCY. You've got the sandwiches in your suitcase, Ned. They come first.

NED (*opening suitcase*). I've got some pickles, too. (*Takes*

out sandwiches and jar of pickles. ELEANOR passes sandwiches around while LUCY passes pickles.)

FRED (*opening satchel*). I've got the fried cakes and cookies.

WALTER. Uncle Ebenezer and I have the candy and the fruit. (*Opens case. By this time all have spread napkins on knees and proceed to eating.*)

HAZEL. This is certainly some spread.

FRED. Some spread is right.

ALICE. Have another pickle, Percy.

PERCY. No, thanks, I'm sour enough already. I'll take another sandwich, though.

ALICE. Pass them along, Eleanor, they're nearer to you than to me.

WALTER. I'll take another one, too, while they're going. I always do as my hubby does.

LUCY. Isn't it too bad Jack couldn't be in it.

NED. Yes, poor fellow, it was bum luck having the measles just at this time.

HAZEL. Marian's lonesome without him.

MARIAN. Why can't we wrap up a part of our lunch and send it to him?

ELEANOR. Just the thing. What do you people say?

WALTER. I'm agreeable.

FRED. So'm I.

PERCY. You mean if there's any left. By the looks of things now there won't be enough left to give him indigestion.

ALICE. Somebody's coming. Who do you suppose it can be?

PERCY. Holy smoke! And all these things around. Help get 'em out of the way, you fellows.

(All try to conceal catables in suitcases, under table, etc. Ludicrous business. All try to appear unconcerned as PROF. enters followed by Mrs. FLETCHER.)

PROF. Miss De Lancy, here is another aunt to see you.

ELEANOR (*aside*). Oh heavens (*To Miss F.*) Why, Aunt Sophronia, you here?

MISS F. Yes, dear, I thought I would take you by surprise.

WALTER (*aside*). Great Scott! Aunt Sophronia!

MISS F. (*looking around*). What are you doing? Having a party?

ELEANOR. Why—er—that is—Aunt Sophronia, let me present you to Professor Brownley and some of my girl friends. (*Business of introduction.*)

PROF. It—er—strikes me as being rather suspicious. I've been introduced twice this evening to your Aunt Sophronia. How do you account for it, Miss De Lancy?

ELEANOR. Why—I—er—that is, I don't account for it—I—

PROF. I see—you don't account for it. (*To WALTER*) Will you please remove your hat and veil?

WALTER. But Professor Brownley, we are only going to remain but a short time.

PROF. But I insist upon it.

ELEANOR. Oh, Professor, they are my guests.

PROF. I am sorry, but—(*WALTER removes hat and veil.*) Ah! just as I thought. So it's you is it, Mr. Bronson. (*To PERCY, FRED and NED.*) Now you gentlemen may remove your

whiskers and wigs. (*They do so.*) Ah, here we have Mr. Longman Mr. Hollister and Mr. Landers. I shall want to see all of you, including the young ladies, at my office to-morrow morning at nine o'clock.

BOYS. Yes, sir.

GIRLS. Oh, Professor, we didn't mean any harm.

PROF. We will decide that in the morning. (*To Mrs. F.*) And as for you, I have no doubt but that you also are an impostor. Your face looks familiar yet I can't quite place it.

MISS F. I an impostor? How dare you call me an impostor, sir? I'll send my niece to another school, that's what I'll do.

ELEANOR. You are mistaken, Professor. She is really and truly my aunt—Miss Sophronia Louise Fletcher of Riceville.

PROF. Ah, now I remember. You're the Louise Fletcher who used to attend Rexmore college?

MISS F. Yes, sir, I am. I never used my first name while I was at college.

PROF. Then do you remember George Brownley who used to be in your classes?

MISS F. Well, I should say I do.

PROF. Miss Fletcher, I am very sorry for what has occurred—I am very sorry that I should have suspected you of being other than what you are, but you see the circumstances under which I labored.

MISS F. Yes, I perceived that the young folks were having a little lark.

PROF. So with my hand on my heart I humbly beg your pardon.

MISS F. You don't need to put your hand on your heart. I'll forgive you without that.

PROF. I thank you, Miss Fletcher, I thank you.

MISS F. Have you forgotten, George—I mean Professor Brownley, what larks we young folks used to have at Rexmore?

PROF. Why—I—er—no, I haven't quite forgotten them, Miss Fletcher.

MISS F. Ha! ha! This evening reminds me very much of our own escapades. As I recollect you and I were as gay as any in our class.

PROF. Tut! tut! Miss Fletcher, you must remember I am principal of this college and—

MISS F. I beg your pardon, Professor. Really I shouldn't have mentioned it at this time.

PROF. (*to students*). Upon second thought, young ladies and gentlemen, you need not report at the office tomorrow morning. we will overlook the matter this time.

STUDENTS. Thank you, thank you, Professor.

PERCY. We will endeavor to be more careful in the future.

ALICE. We were just having a little lunch, Professor. Won't you have some with us—a sandwich or some fruit?

PROF. Why—I—

MISS F. Yes, do, Professor Brownley, for old times' sake.

PROF. Then let it be just a little fruit. (*They pass fruit to Prof. and Miss F. and to each other.*)

MISS F. Now if the young folks would only sing one of their college songs I should be so happy.

HAZEL. We'll be very glad to do so in honor of the one real aunt.

WALTER. Here comes Mrs. O'Reilly looking for another tip.

MRS. O'R. Begorra if the Professor ain't havin' lunch wid the uncles and aunts.

ELEANOR. Come, Mrs. O'Reilly, you, too, may have lunch with us.

PROF. Come, we are waiting for the song, young ladies and gentlemen.

PERCY. Then everybody sing. Here goes.

(All sing college song.)

CURTAIN.



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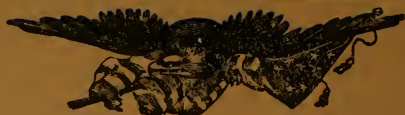
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